### Wu Xinbo Briefing

#### His background:

<http://www.cas.fudan.edu.cn/viewprofile.en.php?id=62>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fudan_University>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fudan_University#Government.2FPolitics>

#### Selected publications:

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<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/ia/INTA91_4_WuXinbo.pdf>

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#### His argument about the SCS:

Wu 16 — Wu Xinbo, Professor and Executive Dean of the Institute of International Studies and Director at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University (Shanghai), former Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, former Visiting Scholar at George Washington University, former Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, and the Henry Stimson Center, holds a Ph. D. in International Relations from Fudan University, 2016 (“China’s rejection of the so-called,” *Guangming Online*, July 7th, Available Online at http://en.gmw.cn/2016-07/07/content\_20867178.htm, Accessed 07-07-2016)

China’s rejection of the so-called “international arbitration” of South China Sea disputes is not only aimed at the arbitration initiated by the Philippines. In 2006, China has made a statement based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), excluding compulsory arbitration on disputes concerning such matters as maritime delimitation, which has been China’s consistent position on relevant issues.

The territorial disputes in the South China Sea should be solved by dialogue and negotiation between the countries involved. China and the 10 ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in 2002, which clearly put forward corresponding rules on the South China Sea disputes. As one of the signatories, the Philippines not only turned its back on the agreement reached between China and the Philippines, but also violated its own solemn commitment in the DOC. Countries who signed the DOC should earnestly fulfill the agreement and actively promote the negotiation on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). We need to beef up political mutual trust and exert effective control on the South China Sea disputes with the overall situation of bilateral relations in mind.

#### His argument about the ECS:

Wu 14 — Wu Xinbo, Professor and Executive Dean of the Institute of International Studies and Director at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University (Shanghai), former Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, former Visiting Scholar at George Washington University, former Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, and the Henry Stimson Center, holds a Ph. D. in International Relations from Fudan University, 2014 (“America Should Step Back from the East China Sea Dispute,” *New York Times*, April 23rd, Available Online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/24/opinion/america-should-step-back-from-the-east-china-sea-dispute.html?_r=0>, Accessed 07-07-2016)

The United States has been a destabilizing force in the dispute between China and Japan over the sovereignty of a small chain of islands in the East China Sea. Not only did Washington create the problem in 1971 by arbitrarily returning the administrative rights of the islands to Japan, but America’s claim that its security alliance with Japan applies to the tiny islands has emboldened Tokyo to take a more aggressive stance toward Beijing.

A peaceful resolution of the issue ultimately depends on the willingness of the Japanese government to acknowledge the dispute and pursue more reconciliatory policies toward China. But a major factor is whether Washington will shift its strategy to help rein in Japan and adopt a more reasonable stance that accommodates Beijing’s concerns about its maritime interests and security environment.

When Chinese-Japanese relations moved toward normalization after Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, Tokyo and Beijing agreed to shelve the disagreement over who owned the islands, called the Senkaku by Japan and the Diaoyu by China. The situation was largely ignored for decades.

But Tokyo’s decision to nationalize the islands in September 2012, prompted by the right-wing former governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, was a major change to the status quo and a violation of the tacit understanding between Beijing and Tokyo to let sleeping dogs lie. China had no choice but to react strongly: Beijing sent its patrol boats to the territorial waters surrounding the Diaoyu and has since maintained regular patrols there aimed at asserting its claim to sovereignty.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, a tough-talking nationalist who’s been in office since December 2012, takes an uncompromising position and denies that there is any question over the islands’ sovereignty. This stance, coupled with a more active security policy and other confrontational policies toward China, shows how Japan has transformed under Mr. Abe into a more assertive power. This shift reminds Chinese people of Japanese aggression in the World War II era, which is a very sensitive issue in China.

The United States has acted as Japan’s enabler. Washington supports efforts in Tokyo to reinterpret the country’s post-World War II pacifist Constitution to allow the military to act in conjunction with allies beyond Japanese territory. Washington encourages Mr. Abe to pursue a more active and assertive security policy, including the buildup of the Japanese military, which may lead to a further strengthening of Japan’s already advanced air and naval forces. And Washington asserts that the United States-Japan security alliance applies to the East China Sea island dispute; the American military has intensified its cooperation with the Japanese military in the area.

These policies suggest that the United States, while claiming to be neutral, not only supports the Japanese position over the islands but, more importantly, prods Japan to be more aggressive toward China. Beijing feels pressure to sustain, and even step up, its patrols in the East China Sea so as to resist the combined American-Japanese power.

The immediate concern, before any long-lasting peace is addressed, is to prevent a minor clash from spiraling out of control. Beijing and Tokyo should give their patrol boats strict guidelines on how to avoid provoking each other. The Chinese and Japanese coast guards should establish a hotline and maintain close contact, so as to avert misjudgment and escalation when an incidental conflict threatens to occur. The two countries should strictly prohibit their citizens from landing on the islands as such actions would certainly invite like reactions from the other side.

Washington is the key to helping establish the environment for a long-term agreement, which ultimately Japan and China have to reach on their own. In this case, for the United States, it is a matter of inaction, rather than action. Washington can help by avoiding a direct role in the dispute. It should not take sides on the sovereignty issue, nor attempt to serve as an arbitrator. Washington should refrain from pledging overt military support to Japan as the Abe administration may regard such support as a blank check to take an even stronger position against China.

The most constructive thing the United States could do is to use its sway to get Tokyo to officially acknowledge the sovereignty dispute.

The most efficient and realistic long-term way to solve the conflict is to reach an agreement that simply puts the sovereignty question aside. In other words, as they did in the early 1970s, China and Japan should agree to disagree, and carry on.

Japan should take the first step and acknowledge that the sovereignty of the islands is in dispute. Were Tokyo to take this leap, Beijing could then suggest shelving the disagreement altogether. To maintain this status going forward, Beijing and Tokyo could establish a “Three No” formula: no entry into the disputed waters, no landings on the islands, and no flight over them.

President Obama’s visit to Tokyo this week is an opportunity to set an agreement in motion. Short of encouraging words from Mr. Obama, a Chinese-Japanese standoff in the East China Sea is likely to continue, undermining regional stability and constraining United States-China relations.

The Diaoyu Islands, which are of little real strategic or economic use, are hardly worth disrupting relations among the world’s three largest economies. It is time to put the issue back into a box.